

# Tia Amo

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## Autumn Artist

Cars

Abandoned



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**Tia Amo**

**Autumn Artist**

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# Summary

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## Description

"Lightning," Francesco said quietly and then again in a sterner voice, "Lightning, who, who did this to you!" "Y-" Lightning choked, looking into the eyes of his lover, "You...did..." Francesco loved Lightning more than he's loved anyone before. But when he hurts him more than he can imagine. How will their love continue on?

\*HUMANIZED\* DOC LIVES!

# 1. Chapter 1

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Why do I do this? Why can't I just finish one story before I jump to the next?! Why, oh why?! Anyway, this is a story I thought of a while back with Lightning/Francesco. I ship these two like FedEx and I wanted to hear what you guys thought of this story that I had so far. You guys want to hear more or do you just want me to keep locked in my own personal archive?

Anyway, here it is: Tia Amo

Tia Amo

A blank white ceiling was the first thing that greeted Francesco as he became aware of the world that he woke up in. He slowly opened up his eyes and blinked several times to adjust to the light. He groaned as he ran his hand through his currently messy brown hair. His head was killing him and his body felt like he had been beat by a bat.

"Merda," he whispered, "Cosa diavolo è successo la notte scorsa?"

"Lightning?" Francesco groggily spoke, "What-a did we-a do last night-a?"

Only to hear no response.

"Lightning?" Francesco reached over to feel Lightning's side of bed, only to discover it completely empty.

Francesco opened his deep brown eyes to see not only Lightning's side of bed empty, but comply disarray. As he looked closer at the mess, wondering where on earth his love could be, he noticed some bright red drops on the sheets.

"Che cosa?" Francesco said softly as he inspected the red drops, "is that-a?"

"BLOOD?!"

Forgetting the pains of the night before, Francesco jumped up in a frantic search for his blond, blue eyed beauty, with his worried sick, hungover mind going a mile a minute.

'Where could he be?! Was he kidnapped? Was there a home invasion and someone took his love away from him? That would

explain why he felt so horrid and beat, but why was there blood on the bed? Oh God, was Lightning hurt?! Did the kidnappers hurt him? What would they want with him? Did they kidnap him for ransom, or worse? Was he kidnapped for sex trafficking?! That's it isn't it! He's going to be sold to the highest bidding pervert in Beijing or Mexico City. He's probably being raped at this very moment!' Francesco had come to the conclusion as he ran through the apartment.

"Nonononononono, oh Dio, per favore no! Francesco prayed as he searched all throughout the apartment.

He ran into the kitchen, only to find everything as spick and span as it was when he last saw it. Everything was nice and neat and organized. Nothing was out of place or strewn everywhere like it would be if an home invasion had occurred. There was no ransom note on the table or anything. He poked his head around the corner into the hallway to the right of the kitchen and saw that the front door was very much locked and intact.

Okay, so maybe there wasn't a home invasion resulting in the love of his life being sold into sex slavery as an exotic fantasy and getting raped by some old creep with a lust for blond hair and blue eyes. While that was huge relief, it still didn't answer his main concern. Where was his love?

It wasn't until he calmed down thought with a steady mind that he realized he hadn't checked everywhere. The bathrooms.

He retraced his frantic steps back to the master bathroom, he didn't see hide nor hair of Lightning. He checked his closet, nothing. He checked the bathroom across from the kitchen, nada. Checked the small linen closet, zilch.

Now, Francesco was seriously begin to worry. And not his going off the wall worry when something minor happens. Like, "Holy shit, this is really bad and starting to freak me out" worry. Francesco was now getting terrified.

He went back to the bedroom and sat on the bed before sheer panic took over.

"Okay, calm down," Francesco shakingly said. "Just think for a minute."

If he wasn't kidnapped, where was he? Did he go somewhere and simply not tell him? But why? Did he tell anyone else he was planning on going somewhere? Should he call his mama to check? She and Lightning were close and maybe he told her where he was going. Or

maybe he should call Doc?

But that was out of the question. Doc frankly hated Francesco and would immediately think he had done something to Lightning and would just be calling him to cover his tracks. When the two went on their first date, Doc practically acted as if he had taken advantage of Lightning when didn't come back when they said they would.

No calling Doc was the last thing he wanted to do, but he wanted to find out where Lightning was more.

In his moment of silent thinking, Francesco heard something very near him.

It almost sounded like whimpering.

Francesco immediately fell to the floor and looked under his bed, the only and only place he didn't look.

Staring back from under neath the darkness of the bed were two teary, blood shot blue eyes.

"Lightning!" Francisco gasped in joy as he immediately reached underneath the bed and pulled Lightning out by the arm. Completely deaf to Lightning's even more frantic crying.

"Lightning! Oh my God, Lightning," Francesco embraced him in a bone crushing hug, "Do you have any idea how worried I was?!"

All the while, Lightning was crying and terrified in Francesco's grasp, and it took a while longer for Francesco to catch on.

"Lightning?" Francesco looked down, finally being able to hear the cries that were coming from his love who he held in his arms.

He expected to see the same blue eyes that he adored looking into day and day out, but what he saw was horrific.

In his lap was Lightning with his arms clenched to his chest. His hair was messy and strung everywhere. His eyes were wide and teary, and scared looking as if he was staring at the devil in the flesh. And his beautiful face was bruised and had a dyed trail of blood from his mouth and nose. Francesco couldn't tell because of his shirt, but Lightning also had bruises on his arms and across his torso and had bruises from his hips down to his shaking knees.

A horrified look immediately swept across Francesco's face as he finally had registered what seemed to have happened.

"Lightning," Francesco said quietly and then again in a sterner voice, "Lightning, who, who did this to you?!"

“Just tell me who done this and Francesco will make sure they never lay another finger on you again!” Francesco tightened the grip around Lightning’s already bruised arms.

“Y—” Lightning choked, looking into the eyes of his lover, “You... did...”

## 2. Hurt

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Wow, this got better reviews than I thought. Thank you, you guys! I think it's worth mentioning that this is an AU AND that this is a way-way sequel to Raising A Storm. Featuring my own character, Fernando Bernolii, Francesco's brother. Here's chapter two for you guys:)

'You did,' echoed in Francesco's head like ripples in a pool. It made him sick to his very core and he felt as if a knife had been plunged so deep into his heart that it shattered his very soul.

"No," Francesco could only say as his grip around his love loosened.

He couldn't believe, no, he wouldn't believe that he dared hurt the one and only person he loved as much as his mother. There must have been some sort of mistake, there had to have been! He never so much as raised his voice directly at Lightning, much less raised a hand to strike him.

How could this be? How could this have happened? Was Lightning somehow mistaken and believed that it was HE who had hurt him? Could someone have broke in and disguised themselves as him and hurt Lightning

"I..." Francesco stammered, "I couldn't 've, there's no way Francesco would've," Francesco quietly said, lowering his head with tears now rolling down his face, his arms tightening around his broken love.

"Well you did!" Lightning cried angrily as he balled his fists and beat on Francesco's chest with what little strength he had left in his smaller body. With Francesco not being phased one bit; as a matter a fact, each pound only made his grip around him tighten.

When Lightning finally exhausted what was left of what energy he had, he finally broke down and collapsed into a ball in Francesco's chest, with his head buried in his chest.

Francesco, not really knowing how to take it all in, was only able to sit there like stone as he held his love as close and as tight as he could.

"Why," Lightning stifled, "Why didn't you stop?"

“Why did you keep going? I begged you to stop, but you kept going.”

“You were hurting me,” Lightning spoke, “And you just wouldn’t stop, no matter how hard I cried for you to stop.”

“L-L-ight,” Francesco finally broke, “Oh my Light!” Francesco cried as he grabbed ahold of Lightning and held him with all of his might.

“I’m so, so sorry!” Francesco held Lightning’s head in his hands and buried his head in his matted blond hair, soaking it in his tears.

“Oh mi Dio! Dio, cosa ho fatto!” Francesco screamed with anguish, “Oh please! Please forgive me my love, my precious little darling angel!”

Francesco was completely shattered. He was inconsolable as he cried his broken heart out to the love of his life for forgiveness for what he had done to him; even though he knew there was nothing he could do from this point on to ever earn that forgiveness. He felt like he stomped on the most beautiful rose the earth had ever produced. As if he defiled an angel sent directly to him from the Almighty Himself! He didn’t deserve him, or even to be in his presence, much less his forgiveness.

Through his deafening sobs of anguish, Francesco heard something he never thought he would ever hear.

“I, I forgive you,” Lightning said, gripping Francesco’s shirt in his fist as he looked up at his lover with the same beautiful blue eyes that Francesco adored.

“You,” Francesco sobbed, tears still streaming down his face as he looked down and locked eyes with his precious love, “you forgive me?”

“Yes,” Lightning weakly smiled, “I forgive you,” Lightning said as he lifted his hand in an attempt to dry Francesco’s river of tears.

Francesco was utterly speechless. Here was the love of his life, hurt, God only knew just how bad, by the monster that was right before him; and yet, he still had the love and found the strength to forgive him.

What his mouth couldn’t say, frankly because it was trembling so much, his deep, now blood shot, brown eyes did. Francesco once again, erupted into a ball of tears and embraced Lightning with all of his might as he smothered his head in hugs and kisses.

While Lightning could only weakly wrap his arms around Francesco's torso and only offer a weak hug.

"Oh my Lightning," Francesco kissed Lightning on his lips and on every mark that was on his beautiful face, "Thank you my love!"

Francesco looked into Lightning's also blood shot eyes and wiped every tear from his face, when he noticed a hand print and other markings on his neck that led down into the privacy of his wrinkled shirt.

Francesco wept to unbutton the shirt to see just what damage he had caused his beautiful love, when Lightning hurriedly stopped him.

"Nononono," Lightning said as he covered the exposed area of skin with his arms, "It's okay, I'm fine."

"You don't need to see that," Lightning mumbled under his breath. And Francesco heard.

"Lightning, darling," Francesco gently took one of his hands and very gently pulled it away, "please let Francesco see."

Lightning didn't have to answer as Francesco began to unbutton his shirt anyway.

Francesco only got to about the fourth button before he stopped in his tracks. Lightning saw horror fill his lover's eyes as he saw still just some of the damage he had done. All across his chest and arms was littered with bruises, some of them were nearly completely black.

"Francesco," Lightning said, worried, "Franny, listen to me—" was as far as Lightning got before Francesco wrapped his entire body around Lightning as if something or someone was fixing to take him away from him.

Francesco completely lost it again. He didn't just hurt his love, he beat him! Brutalized him even! Francesco didn't know how Lightning could possibly forgive him after all the pain he's caused him. But he knew one thing, he would NEVER forgive himself for what he's done to the one person he loved the most.

"Oh my God!" Francesco cried, as he rocked Lightning in his lap, "What happened?! What did I do to you?! What did I do to my baby?!"

"Francesco, honey, it's okay," Lightning tried to comfort him, "It wasn't YOU you that done all this. It was like someone else, a demon, was inside of you, making your body hurt me."

This made Francesco stop crying and listen.

“Wha-what do you mean, baby?” Francesco said as he gently brushed Lightning’s bangs from his face.

“When, ‘it’,” Lightning tried to phrase, “was going on. You weren’t you. It was like a demon had possessed your body.”

“You didn’t even say anything, the whole time,” Lightning said, choosing his words carefully.

“Lightning, what happened last night. Please tell me everything I done to you,” Francesco really didn’t want to know what he had done, as it was obvious to him what he had done. But he felt like he needed to know EVERYTHING that had happened.

Lightning took a deep breath and told Francesco the whole story.

Francesco sat there near lifeless, still holding Lightning in his arms, as his love told him nearly every excruciating detail of what all took place the night before. Lightning had explained to him how he and his brother, Fernando, had went out for the night on the town and Lightning had no idea what they had done until Francesco had come home 100% different. Lightning told him, when he walked in the door home, he had his head down. Lightning told him he didn’t know how he didn’t run into a wall much less make it home alright. Lightning had spent the evening reading a good book and drank a pot of tea, and was fixing to fall asleep on the couch, when Francesco came in close to 12 in the morning. Lightning told him that he just stood in the door way between the hall and the living room like he was dead to the world. He went up to him and put his hand on his face and said his name, when Francesco’s head immediately jerked up and he grabbed him by the throat and very roughly shoved his tongue down his throat. Lightning told him it scared him so he bit Francesco on his tongue, and then he said that’s when Francesco got ‘physical’. Lightning said that he let go of him just for a second, just long enough for him to ask ‘What the hell he was doing?’ before he back handed him really hard across the face. Lightning fell to the floor and hit his head, when he saw Francesco stand over him and stand his foot on his chest; before he leaned down and grabbed a handful of his hair and dragged him down the hall to the bedroom.

Lightning stopped the story when he saw Francesco trembling, with his hand grasping his own. He didn’t know if he should continue to the story, and frankly he really didn’t want to. It should be clear by now what all had happened anyway.

“Francesco?” Lightning asked with concern, “Are, are you alright?”

Francesco heard him, but he couldn't answer him. He felt like if he opened his mouth that he would throw up. Francesco prayed to God that he didn't do what he thought he did.

He could only really reply by allowing more tears to fall freely.

"Please," Francesco finally managed to speak, "Please baby, tell me I didn't," Francesco sobbed, absolutely terrified at the thought of doing to his precious love what he prayed to God he didn't do.

"You didn't mean to," Lightning quietly said, in tears again.

Francesco tried to look him in the eyes and ask him straight forward, but he couldn't. He didn't deserve to ever look at such beautiful gems ever again. Instead he closed his eyes, burning from endless streams of hot tears, and looked away.

"Did, did I, Francesco spoke, nearly unable to ask such a question," Did I r-r-rape you?"

Francesco curled himself into a ball, braising himself for the answer he already knew.

Lightning broke into sobs, trying to forget, but he couldn't. He wished he could tell him otherwise. But he couldn't.

"Y-yes."

That simple word with so much meaning sent Francesco spiraling off the deep end into pitch blackness as he heard his name being frantically screamed from the abyss.

### 3. Time

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I promise you guys, the next chapter of Raising A Storm is coming out really soon! I just wanted to get this out first. Let me know what you guys think of this. Oh, and this might also come in handy for this chapter .com

Enjoy:)

Francesco slowly opened his eyes into a completely different environment than when he blacked out. He blinked a couple of times to make the blurry figures he saw before him come into focus. Once he had done so, he was able to recognize one figure as someone he loved as much as life itself, and a complete stranger by her side.

“Mama,” Francesco mumbled, “quello che è successo? Dove sono?”

Mama Bernoulli immediately went to her youngest son’s side and gently cupped his face, “Babino, sei in ospedale,” She told him. “Ti ricordi a tutti che cosa è successo?”

Francesco stared blankly before his eyes opened wide as he recalled the events that had took place, and the events that were told to him.

“Oh mi Dio, Lightning!” Francesco immediately sat up and was fixing to jolt out of bed, “Where is he Mama? Is he okay? Please tell me he’s alright!”

Before Francesco could jump out of bed and go running off like a maniac in search of his love, his mother and the doctor stopped him and pushed him back down on the bed.

“He’s alright, baby,” Mama Bernoulli told her son, “He’s in the next room, he’s going to be alright.”

“Please,” Francesco sounded frantic, “Let me see him. I need to see him!” Francesco tried to get up again, but was stopped by the doctor.

“Signor Bernoulli, è possibile non lo ancora vedere. Si prega di sedersi e riposare,” the doctor told him, ushering him to lay down.

“Cosa vuoi dire che non posso ancora vedere lui?!” Francesco barked, fixing to shove his way past the doctor and burst his way out the door and into the next room to see Lightning.

But, before he could, his mother grabbed him by the ear and pulled him back into bed.

“Ascolta qui! Non lo vede ancora perché non possiamo rischiare di avere un altro attacco di panico, o addirittura un attacco di cuore!” Mama Bernoulli told her son, “Non lo vedeva anche se richiedeva comunque; l’ospedale, e la legge, non vi permetterà di.”

“Perché, Mama?” Francesco asked.

Mama Bernoulli then sat down next to her son and told him everything that had happened after he had blacked out.

After Lightning had told him what had happened the night before, he had a panic attack and blacked out. Lightning cried for him to wake up before he ran to call her, as he didn’t speak Italian well enough to call for emergency himself. She told him that she immediately called for help and then she rushed over to his apartment. She said when she got there, Lightning had sat him up and was fanning him, trying to get him wake up; she helped him as they waited for help to arrive. In that time, Lightning had told her everything that had happened. Like Francesco was initially, she was in disbelief, but the proof was all over Lightning. When help finally arrive, she followed the ambulance as Lightning rode with him in the ambulance. When they got to the hospital, she told him that they took him in one room and Lightning in a another and got his statement. She instinctively went to follow Francesco, but as soon as he was examined and the doctors found that he had just had a panic attack and that he would be alright, just so long as he didn’t exhurt himself; she then went to check on Lightning. By that time she got to his room, the hospital already called the police, and they were questioning him and getting all the details of what happened. He had already been examined and a rape kit was performed and evidence that an attack had occurred was found on him and in him. Lightning told them everything from when Francesco went out the night before to where they were at now. Mama Bernoulli told Francesco that he leaned his head on her shoulder and cried after he had to recollect the account again and again, which brought fresh tears in Francesco’s eyes once again. She said she embraced him as he finished telling the officers what happened. She told Francesco that when he finished, the officers asked Lightning if he wanted to press charges against Francesco and get a restraining order. She said Lightning immediately rejected any sort of idea of pressing charges against him or filing a restraining order.

“Ma, se non c’è ordine restrittivo, che perché non posso vederlo?”

Francesco asked.

Mama Bernoulli frowned as she told him why he couldn't see his love.

She explained, that it was hospital policy, in cases of domestic violence, to refrain an abuser from coming in contact with their victim for 48 hours during the victim's stay. After the 48 hours, if the victim is to be released and has nowhere to stay but to go back home to the abuser, then the hospital will keep the victim until further arrangements can be made, up until one week after the attack occurred.

"Miele, Lightning sta andando a stare con me per un po'. Ho accettato che vivrà con me fino a nuovo avviso. E che non posso lasciare che lo si vede per almeno una settimana," with a heavy heart, Mama Bernoulli told her son.

She could only watch as her youngest and favorite son curl into a ball on the bed as he burst into tears. It hurt her to see her son in so much pain, but it also hurt her to know what he did to the one he loved with all of his being. But there was nothing she could do. She loved Lightning too, like he was one of her own. She welcomed Lightning into the family with open arms, and she had hoped that Lightning really was the one for Francesco. And he truly did seem to be the right one for Francesco, the two couldn't get enough of each other.

Could things not have been as they appeared between the two? Every couple has their secrets; could theirs have been deeper and darker than anyone thought?

Mama Bernoulli tried not to think on it too much, she had enough on her plate to worry about. But, somehow, she just couldn't shake the feeling that there was something more going on than just meets the eye, call it mother's intuition.

She had never seen Francesco have a violent bone in his body; in fact, she would swear up and down that every bone in his body was romantic. Her oldest son, Fernando, was the only one in the family who had a violent streak. A failed marriage and a rocky relationship with his current girlfriend, about a dozen dropped sponsors and bans from tournaments from violent outbursts were proof enough of that. Unlike his brother, Francesco was EXTREMELY passionate in everything he loved, from his career to the ones he loved the most. From all the people, both women and men, that Francesco had dated in the past, she had never so much as once seen him raise his voice to

any of them, especially Lightning. Lightning was, well, his light! His angel. From the way he talks about him and adores him, you would think that Lightning is one who tells the sun when to rise.

Something happened last night to Francesco that made him a complete monster. He didn't just get drunk. She's seen him when he gets drunk, he gets very lovey and silly, even more than usual. And he is EXTREMELY talkative. You have to threaten him with duct tape across his mouth just to get him to shut up. You don't just flip from happy and lovely to down right homicidal, and say absolutely nothing while doing so. No, he had to be drugged. But by who? And more importantly, why?

She didn't know the answers to those two questions, but she was going to find out anyway she could.

Before the doctor left the room, she turned to him and asked, or rather demanded, that a drug test be performed on Francesco, to see if Francesco had somehow taken something that made him become so violent. And she was pleasantly surprised to hear the doctor tell her that they have already drawn blood and set it off to the lab for testing of any sort of drugs or alcohol. The doctor told her that anything he took within the past 24 hrs should show up on the toxicology report, which they should receive in about a week or so.

However, the doctor also told her that during that time that it is HIGHLY recommended that Francesco and Lightning keep their distance from one another just in case Francesco has a flare up and harms Lightning again. Next time, if another one were to occur, Lightning might not be so lucky.

And with that, the doctor excused himself from the room.

Mama Bernoulli then turned her attention back to her son, who had finally passed out from sheer exhaustion and sorrow. She could only offer his sleeping form a sad smile and a kiss on the forehead as she pulled the covers up to his shoulders. She hated seeing him like this, and she absolutely dreaded the next week or so. Francesco will be so lost not being able to be with, or even see his Lightning; she greatly worried how he would be able to function. But it was for the greater good, for both of them.

She decided to let Francesco try to get some peace and left to go check up on Lightning.

Lightning was laying his bed, staring out the window, watching the world go by. He hated hospitals, he swore it was sheer irony that Doc

was a doctor and worked between his clinic and in every hospital in a 50 mile radius of Radiator Springs. He wanted to go home, back to his extended little family, and forget this nightmare ever happened. But he knew he couldn't; he had thought about it long and hard enough and came to realize that there was no way he could go back home like this. As much as he wanted to see and needed Doc, the only father he's ever known, he knew right what would happen. If Doc saw him like this, all bruised up and beaten, he would personally fly to Italy and kill Francesco with his bare hands; hell, he knew they all would.

No, he didn't want that. What he REALLY wanted was for things to get back to way they were with the love of his life, the man that put him in here. But he didn't know if that was possible either.

You hear it being said all the time, 'you never think it's going to happen to me.' This is something Lightning literally thought would never happen to him in a million years. And why would he think that it would happen to him? He never dated much growing up; he went out with Sally a couple of times, and even Mater. But things between them either didn't go where he wanted and he lost interest or they were going WAY too fast, relationship wise. Francesco was just right for him. And surely, if Doc didn't successfully scare him away, then he just had to be the one. Right?

But now, he didn't know what to think.

What he did know was that he felt like absolute hell. Now that the adrenaline was finally wearing off completely, the pain was beginning to set in. His face hurt, his head hurt, arms, legs, everything hurt. Especially in his, lower region. And it didn't help that the doctors in charge were none too gentle examining him either.

As carefully as he could, he lowered himself to a more comfortable position and was fixing to try and get some sleep, when he heard a knock at the door.

He tiredly turned his head around and saw one of his most favorite women in his life, "Mama Bernoulli!" Lightning cried as he saw the older woman comes towards him with open arms.

"Babino Lightning!" she cried as she kissed the blond's forehead as the two embraced.

Lightning could help the few sobs and sniffles that escaped him. He honestly didn't know how there were anymore tears for him to try cry, but he couldn't help the streams that were flowing from his face.

"Awww, my baby," Mama Bernoulli said to him, "Please don't cry,

you've done enough crying for one day," she soothingly said as she tried to hold back her own tears.

Lightning sniffled, as he looked into the older woman's deep brown, and now teary, eyes; the exact same eyes of his lover, "I think I've done enough crying for both of us," he said.

"Dio vi benedica, il mio bambino," Mama Bernoulli said as she wiped away Lightning's tears, "It's going to be alright, baby. It's gonna be alright."

"Where's Francesco?" Lightning sniffled, looking up at the woman, still wanting to see his lover.

"He's in another room, asleep," Mama Bernoulli told him, stroking his hair.

"When can I go see him?"

Mama Bernoulli bit her lip, dreading the same reaction she got from her son, "I'm sorry, Baby, you can't go see him; and he can't come and see you."

"It's a hospital policy that in cases of domestic violence that the couple involved can't see one another for 48 hours while under hospital care," Mama Bernoulli told him, "Lightning, you're going to have to stay with me for a little while, okay? The hospital is running blood work on Francesco to check for any narcotics that he may have taken and the results won't be back in for at least another week."

"And you two can't come in any sort of physical contact with one another during that time, just in case he has another flare up," Mama Bernoulli sadly said.

Lightning initial reaction was much like Francesco's, he burst into yet another ball of tears and curled himself into Mama Bernoulli's lap.

He could, but he also couldn't understand why they couldn't be together. He could understand if something like this happened more than once; but the thing is, absolutely nothing like this has ever happened. Lightning can say first hand that Francesco never so much as once yelled at him before or even intentionally made so much as a scratch on him.

He could recall one night when they were laying in bed after a sexytime, and while running a hand through his hair, Francesco accidentally pulled on a knot which caused Lightning to whinse and say 'ow'. Francesco reacted like he had made him scream in pain and kept apologizing over and over again to him. And the next morning,

Lightning woke up to find that Francesco had run him a bath and was offering him again and again to let him wash his hair for him, to 'make sure he gets out all the tangles and knots'.

He smiled slightly as he recalled that occurrence and then frowned again at the thought of being away from his love for so long. Even though it'll only be for a week, even just a minute now seems like an eternity.

And it wasn't too long before Lightning found himself in the same spot Francesco was in at that exact moment, passed out from sheer exhaustion and sorrow.

Approximately 48 hours had passed since the incident that changed both of their lives, and Lightning was ready to 'come home', or what he would call home for the next week or so. He tiredly stared out the window of Mama Bernoulli's car as she drove them back to her house and the house where Francesco and Fernando grew up in. He didn't mind staying with her, she house plum cozy with its old classic Italian styles. It sat on top of a hill with some other quaint villas overlooking the city of Porta Costa. You step outside her backdoor and onto the patio and looked like a post card. He thanked her again for letting him stay with her, and assured her that he won't be a bother. She told him that she loved him as her own and he can stay as long as he needs to.

Francesco was released yesterday morning, and was given heavy instruction to not come in physical contact with Lightning and was absolutely forbade from seeing him while he was still in the hospital. But that still didn't stop him from at least trying to come in contact with him somehow. If Lightning had his phone with him, he would discover close to a hundred voice mail messages from Francesco pouring his heart out to him in drunken waves of emotion. He also sent him near constant handwritten, tear stained letters, one for nearly everytime he thought about him; each explaining how much he loved him and how sorry he was and how he would never be able to forgive himself and how he can't wait to hold him in his arms again. He would slip them to Mama Bernoulli whenever she would come to check on him.

Mama Bernoulli stayed with Lightning nearly the entire time and rarely left his side, only leaving to get a few changes of clothes for herself and for Lightning and to check up on Francesco every so often. Everytime she came back from Francesco's, she would always have a stack of letters to hand to Lightning and Lightning would always ask how was he. She would tell him with a sad smile that he was simply

‘making it’, but in reality he was an utter mess. The last time she had visited him, which was just a few hours ago, was to get some of Lightning’s clothes and she was shocked by just how bad he was taking all of this in. The apartment felt dead, even though everything was where it normally was; and Francesco looked, and felt, like the life was just completely sucked out him. His brown bubbly eyes were always bloodshot and had dark circles under them, his cheeks were sunken in like he hasn’t eaten, and his hair was an absolute mess.

She looked around the apartment and noticed that Francesco’s liquor cabinet was completely empty and the master bed was stripped down to just a shredded mattress.

Francesco told her that when he came home and walked around the house, replaying what happened from what Lightning had told him. When he got to the master bedroom, a burst of rage overcame him and he unleashed all his anguish on his bed, the place where he defiled the love of his life. He told her he ripped the sheets to shreds and when he saw that blood stains had soaked down to the mattress, he grabbed a knife from the kitchen and stabbed and slashed the mattress until he collapsed into a ball of tears. He said that after he was done, he went straight to his liquor cabinet and for the past day and half that he had been basically drinking everything and anything he could to numb the pain he was in.

But what he didn’t tell her was that he was hoping he would drink himself to death, but everytime he would just wake up from his stupor with just a bad hangover. He would also never tell his dear mother that he would have slit his wrists and killed himself with that same knife. But, even though he felt like he deserved death, he didn’t want to put her and his beloved Lightning through anymore pain than they had already been through.

As a mother, it pained her deeply to see her son in such bad shape, and a small part of her wanted to slap his head off his shoulders for doing this to himself. But her motherly instincts were saying that he needed just as much help through this as Lightning did and was willing to do anything she could to help him get back to his feet and back to his senses.

Before she left after she gathered up some of Lightning’s necessities and things that would help make him more comfortable; like his phone, computer, and what video games and movies that he brought with him. She offered Francesco a little deal, clean and pull himself up and she will try to let him see Lightning sooner. When she said this, Francesco’s eyes immediately brightened back and he graciously

thanked her over and over. She said that she will come back to check on him after supper that night when she brings him something to eat and if he's gotten a shower and made himself presentable, she'll let him talk to Lightning before he has to take his medicine and go to bed.

This might sound a bit cruel or too leanent depending on who you ask, but she knew how to get through and make a point to her boy, and she wanted to see him get better. And this was the only way.

But boy did she hear an earful from Fernando when she told him. He thought it was a horrible idea, to say the very least. He told her that she was just rewarding bad behavior, that this is just a foreshadowing of something worse to come, and that if Lightning had any sort of sense at all that he would drop Francesco and run for the hills. Mama Bernoulli could only close her eyes and shake her head as Fernando kept ranting and raving. In a normal situation, it would seem like this is a bad idea. But she knew her son, and this was completely out of his behavior. Through his ranting and raving, Mama Bernoulli reassured her eldest son that she would take every precaution necessary and monitor Francesco like a hawk and that she would know if anything was up.

Feeling that he was fighting a loosing battle in their discussion, Fernando gave up trying to reason with his mother. Before he ended their conversation, he told her that he loved her and asked her to give Lightning his best wishes. That he would come by every so often to check in on him.

That phone call took place right before they left the hospital and she thought about all the way home. Was Fernando trying to stir up trouble or was he genuinely concerned in this situation and for Lightning's wellbeing? Mama Bernoulli knew Fernando was very jealous of Francesco and Lightning's relationship. They've been together longer than any of Fernando's relationships put together; and definitely had more passion and love in their relationship than in any of his relationships combined.

She glanced over towards Lightning every now and then, who was just sitting there watching the world out the window. He didn't say much on the drive home from the hospital. She thought he was just too lost in thought.

"Do, do you think that Francesco is okay?" Lightning quietly asked.

"He's going to be alright, dear," Mama Bernoulli reassured him.

"He sounded like he was really torn up in his letters."

“Yes, he wasn’t taking the situation so well when I first went to see him when he got home,” Mama Bernoulli sadly said.

Lightning wanted to ask what all happened, but he didn’t want to make her or himself upset.

“Let’s just say that you two are going to need a completely new bed when everything gets settled back down,” Mama Bernoulli told him.

Lightning frowned when he realized what Francesco must have done when he got home.

A few more moments of silence passed before Lightning broke the silence again.

This time with a gasp as he was thumbing through his phone. Yes, he saw the hundred plus voice messages from a heart broken Francesco and even more texts from him. He chose not to listen or read them right at that moment, because he, again, didn’t want to make himself feel any worse. But what he saw that terrified him the over a dozen missed calls from Doc.

“What’s the matter, honey?” Mama Bernoulli asked.

“Doc,” he simply said.

Mama Bernoulli was instantly filled with dread as she knew what he was talking about.

“I got like 15 missed calls from Doc. He told me to call him everyday, I haven’t talked to him since the morning when it happened. That was nearly 3 days ago,” Lightning said.

“Honey, don’t you think you should tell him what’s been going on?”

“Unless you want to bury your youngest son, Doc must never find out about this,” Lightning warned, “Hell hath no fury like Doc Hudson scorned.”

This put Mama Bernoulli in between a rock and a hard place. She loved her sons and would hope to die before anything ever happened to either of them. And she knew what would happen if Doc found out what happened to his little boy, she would never see Francesco again. But, as a parent, she would want to know if something happened to one of her children. It really didn’t seem right keeping this a secret from Doc; but like Lightning said, if Doc ever found out, she’d have to bury Francesco. And that was the last thing any mother would ever want to do.

“What are you going to tell him the next time he calls?”

“I’m just gonna tell him that Franny and I went on a little vacation and I somehow forgot my phone,” Light explained, “Being the air head that I’m prone to be at times, that’s very plausible.”

Mama Bernoulli couldn’t help but giggle; she still didn’t think lying to Doc was a good idea, but right now it was better than telling him the truth.

Mama Bernoulli pulled up to the house and unlocked the door for Lightning as he made his way in and made a b-line to Francesco’s bedroom. He opened the door and just plopped down on the bed, taking in its still faint smells of its past owner. Lightning swore he didn’t know how he had any tears left in him, but they just kept coming. He quietly sniffled as he grabbed ahold of the pillow and held it up to his face. Wanting to scream his lungs out into it, but instead he remained mostly silent, aside from a few sobs here and there. He didn’t know how he’d manage to spend seven days away from his love. What he wouldn’t give to be wrapped in his arms again right then. Yes, he may have hurt him, but it wasn’t his fault! Why should they both be punished for something he had no control over? Being away from Francesco hurt him, just as much as it hurt Francesco. But they would make it through. Their relationship stood the test of distance, it would withstand the test of time as well.

#### TRANSLATIONS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER:

quello che è successo? Dove sono? = What happened? Where am I?

Babino, sei in ospedale = Baby, you’re in the hospital

Ti ricordi a tutti che cosa è successo? = Do you remember at all what happened?

Signor Bernoulli, è possibile non lo ancora vedere. Si prega di sedersi e riposare = Mr. Bernoulli, you can not yet see. Please sit down and rest

Cosa vuoi dire che non posso ancora vedere lui?! = What do you mean that I can not still see him?!

Ascolta qui! Non lo vede ancora perché non possiamo rischiare di avere un altro attacco di panico, o addirittura un attacco di cuore! = Listen here! You can not see him yet because we can not risk having another panic attack, or even a heart attack!

Non lo vedeva anche se richiedeva comunque; l’ospedale, e la

legge, non vi permetterà di. = You can not see him even if you wanted to; the hospital, and the law, will not let you.

Perché, Mama? = Why, Mama?

Ma, se non c'è ordine restrittivo, che perché non posso vederlo? = But, if there is no restraining order, that why I can not see him?

Miele, Lightning sta andando a stare con me per un po '. Ho accettato che vivrà con me fino a nuovo avviso. E che no posso lasciare che lo si vede per almeno una settimana = Honey, Lightning is going to stay with me for a while '. I accepted that he will live with me until further notice. And that I can not let you see it for at least a week.

Dio vi benedica, il mio bambino = God bless you, my child

I am so sorry for any confusion all these languages may have caused any of you. It was brought to my attention by Wolf Mirage that I could include the translations for any languages down at the bottom. I'm so sorry that I didn't think of this sooner.

If you like this story, please review, it means the world to me:)

## 4. Time (almost) Heals All Wounds

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### Chapter 4: Time (almost) Heals All Wounds

7 days, 5 hours, and approximately 28 minutes after the day their lives changed forever, it was finally time for Lightning and Francesco to be reunited back to one another. Francesco was up and over the moon with excitement. He had been painstaking counting down each and every hour until he could at last hold his precious love in his arms again. Francesco missed him more than he could have imagined. He missed everything about him. He missed waking up in the mornings to him, he missed seeing him walk around the house in one his shirts and a pair of boxers making them an American style breakfast or just fixing them coffee. He missed the sweet sound of his laugh and the angelic tone of his voice. He missed staring into the deep blue pools of his gorgeous eyes, God he missed that especially. He even missed finding blond strands of hair on almost everything Francesco owned.

But what he really missed the most was Lightning's presence in his Francesco's life.

Lightning completed Francesco. He was the yin to his yang, the sweet to his salty. Without him, he felt unbalanced. His world was thrown off it's kilter for 7 long days. But now his world was coming back together again in just a few more short minutes when his mama would bring Lightning back to his apartment.

He had not been able to so much physically touch his love at all for all that time. Sure, Mama Bernoulli did weasele some contact in with her son and his lover, via phone only, but that was it. But Francesco always managed to find a way to make absolute certainty that Lightning knew how much he loved him each and every day that they were apart. He sent him a care package every day. Francesco somehow got into Lightning's Amazon account and ordered him every single thing on his Wishlist. He sent him flowers and to die for sweets, along with anything his heart desired, everyday. He had instructed Mama Bernoulli to take Lightning to a furniture store and pick out a completely new bedroom suite, new bed, mattress, sheets, comforter set, everything; and he would come in a pay for it. Francesco wanted everything in that room to be completely different than who it was the night 'it' happened. Hell, he even was willing to go so far as to get a new apartment. But Lightning was against it. Lightning told him that he didn't need to pick up everything and move to a new place just

because something bad happened in it.

Because of that stupid law enacted by the authorities, Francesco was unable to come into come in any sort of physical contact, but Francesco did managed to sneak a few glances at Lightning while he and Mama Bernoulli were out and about the town. It took every ounce of his will power not to rush up to the blond and hug the life out of him. Francesco wouldn't say that he stalked him, he was just keeping an eye on him from afar.

They say to see the big picture, you needed to take a good step back and observe. Francesco was able to see alot keeping an eye on his love from a distance. And he didn't like what he saw when he seen his older brother accompanying Lightning, alot. Fernando was nearly everywhere Lightning was! Everytime he called his mama, he was there with Lightning. Everytime Lightning and Mama Bernoulli went out, there he was. Mama Bernoulli just brushed the attention her eldest son was giving the boy off as genuine care and concern. Francesco saw something completely different. He saw malicious intent.

Behind every action Fernando made, there was an ulterior motive. Growing up, Francesco noticed that practically every reason Fernando ever done anything was so that he could profit from it somehow, in one way or another. Francesco had seen his brother pull many-a tricks and he knew he had a whole deck of cards up his sleeve for him to pull at any given opportunity. And when he saw his older brother get close like that to HIS precious love, it made his blood boil.

If Fernando honestly thought he could woo his brother's love away just like that, then he had another thing coming.

Francesco really pulled a 180 than how he was a week ago. The apartment was spick and span and fit to be on the cover of a magazine. Every square inch was clean, and put in its place. The bedroom was redone with immaculate precision and order the exact way Lightning had picked out. He had made sure everything was in perfect order for his perfect little prince.

Francesco look at himself one last time in the mirror before Lightning was to arrive. He looked like he was going back out on his first date. He had an a black pinstripe suit with a white button up shirt. His tie was a fitting shiny, charcoal grey. He even sprayed on a couple of sprays of Lightning's favorite of his cologne.

As he he finished checking himself over for the third time, all there was left to do was take a seat on the couch and wait for those few

knocks on the door to be heard.

Lightning was a whole variety of emotions as he looked in the mirror of his boyfriend's old bathroom next to his bedroom where he had been staying for the past week. He was happy, excited, anxious, and scared all wrapped up in one. He should be feeling just happy and excited that this week was finally over where he could be reunited with the man he loves. But he was always very nervous and even scared at what might come from all of this.

He was scared that this wouldn't be the first and last time that he ever saw his lover's 'darkside', as Fernando had put it. Ever since he's known him, even with Francesco's ego through the roof at times, he's never seen him in such a fit of pure hate/anger/rage like he has seen him that awful night. No matter how hard he tried to forget, he just couldn't.

He squinched his eyes shut as the hate in his lover's eyes flashed before his eyes; hate he had never seen before in his life, much less from someone that supposedly loves him, directed at him. Lightning honestly didn't know if he could ever look in those eyes again without reinvisioning that hate everytime he gazed into those deep brown pools.

"Light-aning-a," he heard a knock on the bathroom door, instantly recongizing it as the eldest of the Bernoulli brothers, "Are-a you alright-a?"

"Yeah," Lightning said hastefully, "Yeah, I'm alright Fernando," Lightning said as he wiped the few tears forming in his eyes.

"You don't-a sound alright-a," Fernando said, slowly opening the door.

"Well," Lightning said, 'You would be right.' "I'm not."

Fernando sighed as slowly approached the blond and put a strong, massive hand on his shoulder.

Lightning flinched at the touch, just slightly though. It was so different, compared to Francesco's. Fernando's was strong, like Francesco's, but it was a different kind of strong. Francesco's as a kind, loving strong. The kind that will pull you together when you're falling apart. Fernando's was the kind of strong that would choke the life out of you. He's always claimed it was 'the grip of his career'. Being one of the best tennis players in all of the world, his grip was as crucial to him as a steering wheel were to Lightning and Francesco. The thing is, Lightning didn't know if he was steering himself in the

right direction.

“Do-a you want to-a talk about it-a?” The towering man said as he approached the younger.

Lightning took a few sighs and gently placed his small hand over the massive one lying on his shoulder.

“Yes, and no,” Lightning admitted, ‘I’m just scared.’ “I’m scared that this won’t be the last time I ever see that side of him.”

“I’ve seen him mad and even angry before,” Lightning recalled one of the many times Francesco’s overprotectiveness reared its ugly head, “Like that time we went out to this casino in Vegas and some guy just started talking to me about something; the guy put his hand on my shoulder in a friendly way and Francesco saw him and snatched me away and looked like he wanted to rip the poor guy’s arm off.”

“But never have I seen in such a state of anger and pure rage like I did that night,” Lightning sniffled, lifting a hand to wipe away the few tears that were forming, when Fernando turned him around and done the act for him.

“Hey now, no more-a tears-a,” Fernando said in a kind voice, as he cupped the side of Lightning’s face and wiped the tears away with his thumb, “It will-a ruin those-a beautiful blue eyes-a.”

Lightning couldn’t look up at the older man for fear that if he did that he would burst into another ball of tears. Until Fernando took a hand and lifted his chin up gently, making the two look each other in the eyes. Upon gazing into eyes so similar to his lover, Lightning lost all control and burst into tears as he clung to the man that was ten years his senior.

Fernando wrapped his strong arms around the boy as he emptied his broken heart out onto his shirt. If Lightning were to look up, he would have saw the older man smiling in a way down at him.

“Light-a-ning-a,” Fernando said as he ran a hand gently through the gorgeous hair of the blond, “Do-a you feel safe-a going back to-a Francesco?”

Fernando’s statement practically stopped Lightning in his sobs. He truthfully didn’t know how to answer that. Up until that night, he had always felt safe around Francesco. He always knew Francesco would protect him no matter what. Up until that night.

Now, he didn’t know what to think, or feel, about Francesco.

“I,” Lightning began, clenching a fist full of Fernando’s shirt, “I

don't know."

Fernando unwrapped his arms around Lightning and leaned down to his level so he could look at him directly in the eyes.

"Light-a-ning-a," Fernando told him firmly, "You don't-a have to-a do, or go, or be with-a anyone-a you don't-a want to-a. You don't-a have to-a go back to-a Francesco if you don't-a feel safe-a. And if-a I were you-a, I wouldn't."

"You-a can't trust-a someone that-a hurts you like-a he did-a," Fernando told Lightning.

In a way, Lightning felt that Fernando was right. How could you ever trust someone again that hurts you like Francesco did? In reality, no one in their right mind would.

But love sometimes causes one to overlook it when someone they love causes them pain. Almost like how a mother forgets the pain of labor when they want to have another child.

He loved Francesco and he knows Francesco loves him; and Lightning knew he would never do anything intentionally to ever hurt him.

"I'll, I'll be alright Fernando," Lightning said as he wiped his nose on his sleeve, "I love him, and he loves me. Love conquers all, right? We'll make it through."

"Nothing like this has ever happened between us," Lightning told the man, looking him the eye, "Trust me, if it had, I drop him like a bad habit and run for the hills. But he's never so much as yelled at me before," Lightning said.

"Whatever caused him to act like he did that night was just a fluke, he had to have been drugged or something," Lightning said, trying to convince himself, "We'll be alright."

Fernando sighed at the younger man's stubbornness as he grabbed a tissue from the counter, "You are-a as stubborn as-a a mule-a, you know-a that-a?" Fernando said as he held the tissue up to the boy's running nose, "Blow-a, it's-a grossing me out-a."

Lightning couldn't help but smile as he done what he was told.

"Thanks, Fernando, you don't have to worry about me," Lightning shot him a reassuring smile, "I'll be okay."

"For your-a sake-a, I hope so-a," Fernando said as he ruffled his blond hair.

Lightning turned from the man to exit the bathroom, Fernando had him turn to him one more time, “Call me if-a ANYTHING goes-a wrong-a, will you?”

“Don’t worry, I will,” Lightning smiled at him before he walked out the bathroom door.

Francesco was sitting on the couch, his leg shaking and him as nervous as a whore at mass. Mama Bernoulli said that she would bring Lightning by 12:00, and it was close to 12:30. Being Mr. Punctual Always On Time, Francesco was fearing the worse.

“What if they gotten into wreck? Was Lightning alright? Did he feel alright? Did-a he get sick and Mama have to take him to the hospital? Did Fernando try anything and hurt him? I swear if he made so much as a scratch on him, I’m gonna beat his face in so much that Mama won’t even recognize him,” Francesco stammered on like a nervous wreck as he began to pace around the living room.

Francesco continued to mumble and make other threats to his older brother and other obcentities in Italian if anything or anyone harms his beloved, until he was stopped in his tracks by a few knocks on his door.

Lightning’s heart felt like it was going to beat out of his chest, he was almost shaking as he held his fist up against the door after he knocked. No, scratch that, he was shaking. He was terrified at what could be waiting for him just on the other side of the door. Had everything gone back to normal, or as normal as things could get? Was Francesco okay? Was he back to his lovey dovey goofy self? Or was his “darker self” just beginning to show his ugly side?

“Hey,” Lightning heard as he felt a familiar hand on his shoulder, “You alright-a? You’re-a shaking,” Fernando said softly as he leaned down to Lightning’s level.

Lightning bit his lip, what he wanted to say was ‘no’, but his voice was frozen. He opened his mouth, but before he could get his voice to work, the door flung open.

In an instant, the only thing that seperated the two lovers was no more, for the first time in a little less than 2 weeks the two saw eachother face to face.

The mouth that was agape on the blond turned into a smile.

The deep brown pools that he adored to stare into that belonged to his passionate lover stared at him for just a moment before they turned watery.

For just a few moments, there was nothing but silence.

“Well I feel like I missed a memo,” Lightning laughed jokingly, seeing Francesco all dressed up in his best like he was going to be meet the Queen of England or something, while he was just wearing a casual shirt and his faded holey jeans.

“Lightning,” Francesco choked, slowly reaching his arms out to the blond before engulfing him in an enourmous hug, “Oh my Lightning!”

“Please! Please forgive me!” Francesco cried as he held onto his love as if his life depended on it.

Lightning buried his head in the crook of Francesco’s neck as the tears freely poured from his face as he wrapped his arms around him tightly. That bottle of emotions was shaken up and popped like a cork of a bottle of champagne on New Year’s. All the anxieties, all the fears and worried just let loose and Lightning was overcome with a joy and happiness that he feared he would never feel again.

Francesco’s knees became weak as he embraced his love and the two collapsed to the floor.

“Oh my darling!” Francesco cried as he held Lightning’s head in his hands, wiping away his tears as he kissed him all over his face, “What did-a I ever do to-a deserve you-a! I love-a you, so so much-a! Please, please forgive-a me!”

“Oh Franny!” Lightning said with an ear to ear grin, with tears still streaming down his face, “I love you and there is nothing you could do to ever make me stop loving you!”

Francesco could only stare into those big beautiful eyes for only a few moments before he erupted into another ball of joyous tears of the proclamation of his love. He had never felt such a deep, unshakable feeling of love and compassion towards another soul like he does for his Lightning. He didn’t deserve his love in return, much less his forgiveness for the atrocities he committed against him. Francesco felt like a new man, a fresh new beginning was being given to him that he didn’t feel he deserved. He had messed up so, so much in the past, even way before the incident that shook their lives to the very core just a week prior. He never forgave himself for how he treated Lightning when they first met. How he basically trashed talked him on live TV. If only he had knew the incredible soul, truly one of the greatest beings on earth in his eyes, that was Lightning Owen Hudson McQueen then Francesco would have been singing the highest of high praises about him. But his petty cockiness blinded his view and could have very easily trampled on the friendship that would

bloom into the passion they had for one another today.

He had messed up so much in the 3 years they have known each other, and Francesco could never understand how Lightning managed to forgive him each and every time, including now. Francesco had failed Lightning so much, and yet Lightning forgave him and love him just the same. And Francesco was determined to never fail his love ever again; even if he had to make him fall in love with him again each and every day, just like Lightning had unknowingly made Francesco, then Francesco would do anything and everything to make his love's heart sing like he made his very own sing.

Francesco gathered himself with his love in his arms off the floor and carried him bridal style across the threshold into the apartment. Leaving the two others alone in the hallway. Mama Bernolli's eyes twinkling with tears to see her son and his lover with such bliss. Fernando, on the other hand, only rolled his eyes as he followed the bunch into the apartment.

Lightning's eyes lit up as he saw the presion that his lover put into their home. The only time he seen the place looking this neat was when he first came over. They kept the place clean most of the time, but not like this. Lightning could actually see their reflection in the polished floor and the counters just seemed to sparkle.

"Wow Franny!" Lightning said with amazement, "You really out done yourself. The place looks amazing!"

"Not as amazing as you, my love," Francesco nuzzled the blond, who was still in his arms, not wanting to let him go for a moment.

Lightning smiled as he wrapped his arms around his lover's neck as he gave him a passionate kiss on this lips, "I love it, honey," Lightning said reassuringly.

Francesco repositioned the boy in his arms where he was no longer being held bridal style, but instead frontwards face to face. With his spare hand, he ran it through his love's gorgeous hair as he kissed him again all over his face and head.

"You will never know how much I love you, my dear angel," Francesco tenderly said as he leaned their foreheads together.

For a moment, it was just the two of them in the whole world; each staring the other in the eye with such tender love and affection, until Fernando cleared his throat.

"Nice place-a, Little Fratello," Fernando said with a mocking tone in his voice, "too bad-a you don't-a keep it like-a this all the time-a."

Francesco felt his eye twitch as his brother's remark, tightening his hold around his love.

"Why it was a shame I didn't keep the place in such a nice condition before," Francesco smoothly spun his words as he placed his hand over Lightning's head protectively, "I can assure you it will be kept this way from now on. Only the best will be in the presence of my love."

With that Francesco glared at Fernando, daring him to make another comment.

Fernando only smirked as he made his way past his younger brother, and sat on the couch like it was his own. Francesco swallowed his pride and resentment, and turned his attention back to the two most important loves of his life.

He turned to his mama, who was standing in the doorway with pride and love beaming in her eyes for your youngest.

"Mio bambini," Mama Bernolli said with tears in her eyes as he embraced her son and the boy she considered to be her own. To which both Lightning and Francesco graciously returned.

"Thank you, Mama!" Francesco told his mother as he kissed her over again, "Thank you for taking care of my love!"

Mama Bernolli returned with kisses the kisses to her son, and then to Lightning, "I love him like my own, I would do anything for him."

"Thank you, Mama!" Lightning replied, hugging the older woman, to which she graciously returned.

Lightning may not have known her five years ago, but she made him feel like he was her own flesh and blood, like Flo had made him feel all his life. Francesco and Fernando were both lucky to have her as their biological mother.

Lightning went to get down out of Francesco's arms, as he wanted to settle back in, but Francesco tightened his grip around him.

"No no, my love," Francesco said affectionately as he gazed in Lightning's eyes, "Please let Francesco hold you. I can't bare to be away from you even for a moment."

Had anyone glanced over towards the couch, they would have seen Fernando rolling his eyes. If they had been listening, they would have heard him mumble under his breath, "Lightning MIGHT not want to be around you."

But Lightning didn't protest, he only smiled and wrapped his arms around Francesco's neck and kissed him.

"Don't worry, I'll always be right here," Lightning told him lovingly, resting his head under Francesco's chin.

Francesco felt his heart melt. What did he ever do to deserve this bundle of unconditional love, that filled his heart with such joy, in his arms? He loved the gorgeous blond more than the boy would ever know. He couldn't imagine his life without him in it. Even if they were away from each other for just a moment, Francesco would tear the world apart to find him. He felt that he would have no other reason to live if he couldn't have his heart and love by his side.

"Come darling," Francesco sung, "Let me show you to your new suite."

Francesco was giddy with excitement to show him their, his, new bedroom suite.

"Close your eyes my love," Francesco told him before he opened the door, "And don't open them until I say so."

Lightning smiled and giggled like a small child as done as he was told, he turned his head to the crook of Francesco's neck so he wouldn't be tempted to peak.

He felt Francesco take a several steps into the room before he stopped and shifted Lightning in his arms. Lightning was about to ask if it was okay to look, until he felt himself being gently laid down on what felt like a pile of soft clouds.

"Okay, open your eyes, my sweet prince," Francesco said, kissing Lightning's nose.

Lightning slowly peeked open his eyes, and when he finally opened them, for a moment he thought he was a beautiful majestic gilded palace. Virtually nothing in the room remained the same like it was that night. Everything was different. The walls were painted an ivory white, with painting and tapestries hung on them. The floors were now a deep mahogany and had several ornate rugs on it. The bed itself was now a canopy bed with red curtains around them. The Comforter was red with gold trim in the center and the edges, and sheets were off white stripes. Everything he had described and picked out was there.

"Do you like it, my darling," Francesco cooed.

"Oh my gosh, Franny!" Lightning said excitedly, his eyes beaming

at the beauty of it all, “I love it! It looks like a castle, a palace!”

“Only the best will be in the presence of my darling angel,” Francesco said as he leaned down on top of Lightning and kissed him gently, first on the lips and then down his neck.

Lightning lightly moaned as Francesco kissed him as he ran his hands through his hair, and then down his body. God, it felt good to be back with his love. He missed him so much when they were away from each other. He missed his gently touches, his sometimes rough kisses. He missed his smell, his embrace. If he wasn’t certain Mama Bernolli was still in the room, Lightning would have climbed on top of Francesco and rode him like the stallion that he was.

Just when Lightning was reminiscing on all the wonderful times they had spent together as two lovers becoming one, flashes of that horrible night resurfaced in Lightning’s mind. Tears began to swell up in Lightning’s eyes and he clenched his jaw shut. He felt himself instinctively draw up and reject any further displays of affection brought on by Francesco.

“Wha-what’s wrong my love,” Francesco asked, perplexed as to the sudden change in demeanor, until it too dawned on him.

“Franny, I’m sorry,” Lightning said, shaking his head in a hushed tone, “I can’t. I’m sorry, I just can’t.”

Lightning could feel Francesco’s heart breaking, as was his own, but he hoped Francesco could understand.

“Hey,” Francesco gently said, as he lifted his chin up gently, “It’s okay, darling. We won’t rush things. Things will get there in time. You take all the time in the world you need; and when you are ready, I’ll be ready,” Francesco finished as he wiped away the tears that were forming in his lover’s beautiful eyes.

Lightning could only smile with love in his teary eyes and he hugged and held onto Francesco with all his might, as Francesco almost instantly following suit.

By the time, Mama Bernolli made her leave out of the room, to give the two some much needed privacy. But on the other end of the door, Fernando had been watching the whole scene unfold. After witnessing Lightning temporary mini meltdown, he too left the two with a smirk on his face.